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## Image Making of Pakistan in Fiction After 9/11: Critical Discourse Analysis of *Thinner than Skin* by Uzma Aslam Khan

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### ABSTRACT

According to Fairclough (1989), discourse is shaped by social practices and in return it reveals power ideologies. Pakistan's political position in post 9/11 scenario is significant in relation to American war on terror. The present study is an effort to understand image making of Pakistan by the discourse of Pakistanis, foreigners who visit Pakistan and to some extent media as depicted in *Thinner than Skin* by Uzma Aslam Khan. Fairclough's model of discourse analysis with micro, meso and macro levels will be used to unfold American political ideology of thrusting war on terror upon Pakistan. Moreover, in socio-cultural perspective, status of Pakistani woman will be compared with American empowered woman through the lens of critical discourse analysis. The research is an endeavor to reveal discursive practices both in political and socio-cultural domains.

**Keywords:** discursive practices, critical discourse analysis, Fairclough's model

### Introduction

Geopolitical significance of Pakistan has always been pivotal to powerful political wings of America and Russia but it has gained momentum after the event of 9/11 with the declaration of war against terrorism (Akhtar, 2012; Fair, 2013). Modern fiction writers specifically South Asians have taken keen interest in presenting impacts of 9/11 on the life and behavior of both Americans and Pakistanis (Sadaf, 2018). *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid (2007), *The Emperor's Children* by Claire Messud (2006), *Home Boy* by H M Naqvi (2009), *Oblivion* by Foster Wallace (2015) and *Thinner Than Skin* by Uzma Aslam Khan (2012) are a few noteworthy examples of post 9/11 fiction. The present research is an effort to understand image making of Pakistan through the discourse used in fictional work and selected work for this purpose is *Thinner than Skin* by Uzma Aslam Khan. At a cursory glance, the novel captures the natural beauty of Northern Pakistan. A deep perusal reveals that it is a critique on the social construct of Pakistan in the wake of 9/11 to reveal how lives of Pakistanis got affected by the event that they neither experienced nor were responsible for. An American girl Farhana, takes interest in seeing Northern Pakistan with her Pakistani boyfriend Nadir. Irfan, a friend of Nadir keeps discussing present issues with Nadir that conveys the sentiments and understanding of Pakistani masses in the novel.

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Moreover, the narrator has also interfered with the weaving of discourse through characters. Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis is taken to develop an understanding of those silent yet salient factors which shape up discourse. The rationale of using his model is to explain and then interpret those ideologies which affect discourse (Morley, 2004) and make up certain image of Pakistan in the eyes of the West and modern reader of fiction specially written by South Asian writers. The novel also presents the developing ideas of Pakistanis and American foreigners about Pakistan as allies of war on terror that has deep political connotations. The research reveals political ideology of America regarding Pakistan's dormant status in accepting American policies and to ensure security of the foreigners in Pakistan (Kayani, 2011). It also probes into sociocultural ideologies of Pakistan. Sociocultural ideologies under study are woman's role in Pakistani society, economic status of Pakistan and thinking patterns of Pakistani people in the context of postcolonial age. Therefore, the novel has also been interpreted with intent to bring forth sociocultural aspects that are related to the status of woman in contrast to the Western images and some remaining images of white man in colonized minds (Pakistanis). Fairclough's model suffices the purpose of research because the emerging discourse reflects hidden agenda or at least ideologies grown over a period of time in the international politics after 9/11. While discussing Pak American relations it becomes indispensable to segregate politics from economy and democracy. *Thinner than Skin* by Khan is about Northern regions of Pakistan which directly got affected due to army actions against terrorists and Waziristan's close vicinity with Afghanistan has also raised American's suspicions in this regard. Khan has conveyed discourse of the locals and their arguments with the foreigners to position them in the backdrop of politicized war on terror where Pakistan has been assigned a specific role by America to play. Nadir is a Pakistani who is visiting North Pakistan with his girlfriend Farhana, an American born of Pakistani father and Wes, another foreigner. Nadir's friend Irfan is a guide on their trip whose discourse reflects thinking of an educated Pakistani about his country in this entire drama of war on terror. The research is aimed to generate a link of literary discourse with society as literature is believed to be a reflection of society (Albrecht, 1954). Discourse has a close connection with manipulation of ideologies which are otherwise hidden or implicit (Dijk, 2006). The novel offers discourse not only in the form of characters' utterances as actors in the theoretical mould rather the writer's narrative has further enhanced the understanding of the multifaceted interpretation of Pakistan's status quo.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The present research will probe into the influence of hidden ideologies on discourse developed in Pakistani society at various levels. It has addressed the image making of Pakistan in post 9/11 fiction through projecting political and sociocultural ideologies working latently in the context as proposed by Fairclough in his model of CDA. Discursive power practices will be interpreted both in political and sociocultural perspectives. The structure of the novel weaves around positioning of a foreigner, a Pakistani educated friend cum guide and local people of Northern areas who encounter such bitter realities of war on terror for being a neglected part of Pakistani population.

Moreover, women's status in Pakistani society will also be subject to interpretation not from a feminist perspective rather from the image making through discourse in post 9/11 fictional work. An understanding will be enhanced regarding present discourse in media to see how much the novelist Uzma Aslam Khan could present from Pakistani society in the context of 9/11.

### Research Objectives

- To unfold influence of ideologies (political and socio-cultural) on discourse as conveyed in *Thinner than Skin*.
- To analyze image making of Pakistan through discursive power practices both in political (post 9/11) and socio-cultural scenario in *Thinner than Skin*.
- To do critical discourse analysis of the novel through (Fairclough model)
  - Description
  - Explanation
  - Interpretation

### Research Questions

- How do ideologies (political and socio-cultural) influence discourse to make a certain image of Pakistan in *Thinner than Skin*?
- Which discursive power practices are projected in *Thinner than Skin* by Uzma Aslam Khan?

### Methodology

A qualitative approach will be developed to interpret ideologies that influence discourse. Fairclough's model of Critical discourse analysis will serve the purpose of linking discourse with discursive practices in political and socio-cultural context.

### Theoretical Framework

Fairclough (1989) has given three layered model of understanding the text which includes micro, meso and macro level. At first, text will be evaluated at micro level by taking into consideration lexical items and grammatical structures. At meso level the contextual ideologies and power practices will be highlighted to understand image making of Pakistan in their light such as American war on terror and Western sociocultural beliefs about Pakistan. Then interpretation of the text will be done at macro level to understand the role of discourse in image making. Since discourse is affected by ideologies and it develops certain image making, therefore Fairclough's model justifies such complex understanding of ideology, discourse and power. Other than these three layers of meanings Fairclough gave three significant features to enhance interpretation of the text and these are the relational, the experiential and the expressive values. Through a comprehensive study of text formation and interpretation within Fairclough's framework at the

given three levels, image making process can be understood in the genre of fiction where fiction work mingles with the reality of modern age life. The contrasting identities of a foreigner and a Pakistani provided a relational understanding of discourse where we feel that their national ideologies somewhere take sides with their understanding of prevailing happenings.

In the analysis of the novel Fairclough's model will be used at first to evaluate the text formation. The use of language and figures of speech in the novel has complemented the intricate perceptions of the characters about their relevant countries i.e. the USA and Pakistan. The words will be analyzed in the context of Pak-American war on terror since capitalization, repetition and metaphors reflect various salient ideas. Discursive practices of the Americans visiting Pakistan unfold the position of locals and the foreigners. The research will also investigate the nature of relationship between the two to indicate the dominant role of the Americans. Furthermore, institutional role and media interpretations will be evaluated to see the close link between society, literature and discourse.

## Literature Review

Fairclough introduced the idea about how power is exercised through discourse. His model has three main components; the text, the discursive practices, and the sociocultural practices. He proposes that language is a part of society. In terms of literature the concept was further enhanced as, "there is the material individualization of the book which occupies a determined space, which has an economic value, and which itself indicates, by a number of signs, the limits of its beginning and its end; and there is the establishment of an oeuvre, which we recognize and delimit by attributing a certain number of texts to an author." (Foucault, 2009: 25). Foucault focused upon power and discourse while Fairclough related the discourse with unseen agenda (ideologies) which is often not perceived by masses. In his opinion critical discourse analysis aims to investigate "hidden determinants" and their effect on discourse because language is a social process (Fairclough, 2001: 4). While discussing ideology it is significant to note its broad spectrum that has been commented upon by various critics. Wetherell encapsulated the concept of ideology, "... it can be seen how every feature of the conventional sociological landscape – social structures and divisions, institutions, financial, military, health and educational practices – is imbued with ideology and with discourse." (Wetherell, 1993: 61).

Fairclough proposed that for developing critical understanding of discourse there is a requirement of "theorization and description of the political, economic and social processes and structures responsible for the production of such texts" (Fairclough 1998, 94). This fundamental theoretical claim inevitably calls for an understanding of multiple interdisciplinary growing patterns. Therefore, mere description of texts cannot help in understanding the emerging pattern out of many in the background which are further woven in ideologies. Literary analysis is based on understanding the apparent and the implied meanings but by understanding referential power relations literary understanding will be enriched with practical knowledge of day to day life.

Mengibar (2015) considers text not to be "ahistorical production". It has come out of some historical event or at least some ideology is working behind it. The Story of *Noble Rot*, Khan's

first novel, was published by Penguin Books India in 2001, and re-issued by Rupa & Co in 2009. It met with positive reviews in significant journals and newspapers in Pakistan and India.

Her second novel, *Trespassing* (2003) has been translated into fourteen languages in eighteen countries and was set in the context of Afghan war and Gulf war. The work has been much appreciated by critics and called "prescient" in review in *The Independent*. She has been appreciated and nominated by literary circles for various awards for having shown interest in writing about eager involvement of the West in the prevailing situation of the East specially Asia. Uzma Aslam Khan's fourth and most recent novel, *Thinner Than Skin*, was published in 2012 in the US, and subsequently in Canada, India, and France. It was nominated for the Man Asian Literary Prize 2012, the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2014 and won the inaugural KLF-Embassy of France Fiction Prize at the Karachi Literature Festival (KLF). There is very less critique available on the selected novel therefore the present research will be an effort to enhance literary understanding of the novel with a critical discourse perspective.

## Discussion

While discussing a Pakistani society there are several factors involved in construction of discourse. The novel revolves around the perception of a Pakistani and a foreigner about Pakistan through discourse. It has also referred to the discursive practices in the political and sociocultural spheres. According to Fairclough, language is a social formation process. The under-study novel unfolds the situation though fictional yet revealing many layers of realities which are related to hidden power controls over countries and consequently societies as well. While applying Fairclough's model three given levels will be followed in hierarchy from micro to meso and then macro level. Similarly, the discourse formation and its impact on image making in return will be analyzed in political as well as sociocultural perspective. Therefore, these perspectives of research will be intertwined at various levels such as society, ideology and discourse.

On lexical level of textual understanding it can be analyzed through describing various examples that Khan has used lexical items to give voice to chaotic political dynamics in Northern Pakistan. The valley is introduced in the beginning of the story as a metaphor of telling tales of miseries of people from Northern region of Pakistan. The region is subject to political importance since cold war but post 9/11 scenario has added to its significance. The use of metaphor is suggestive that there are many hidden tales in Northern regions of Pakistan which never rise to the surface as a result of hidden agenda of media. Pakistan has been paying price of its political alliance with America in war against terror. Khan has presented valley as "Whose cry was about to cut through the valley?" (p.1). The beginning of the text ignites a series of questions which place Pakistan in a very sensitive position. Pakistan has become allies of America in war on terror that has generated unanswered and inexplicable series of crisis especially in Northern regions. The lexical item "to cut through the valley" has set up a background for all happenings in the novel with the perception that stories are yet to be told.

The text has a variety of italicized words and sentences that reflects the formation of text. All italicized words give voice to the dynamics of power behind discourse. She has also glaringly



emphasized on the hegemonic roles and discursive power. She has referred to the puppet status of Pakistan in war against terrorism in a reference to the pets, “She liked the animals. *When you call, they come.*” (p.3) In these lines by a relational understanding of the powerful and the powerless groups, political ideologies are hinted upon that indicates powerless status of Pakistan in terms of its relations with the US. A headline by Reuters (2018) says, “Pakistan army chief says nation felt 'betrayed' by U.S. criticism”. After five years of publication of the novel, Pakistan’s position is still dependent upon the status given to it by the US, otherwise a breach in such common consented alliance will give us a feeling of being left or betrayed because the word betrayal suggests that Pakistan is at the US disposal.

After having an evaluation of text formation, the research will be focused upon interpretation of ideologies and discursive practices in political and socio-cultural perspectives.

### **Political Scenario**

Pakistan had to accept the role assigned to it in war against terrorism by Americans and face the dire consequences as well. The growing hostility in the neighborhood affected the state of peace in Pakistan. Khan has commented upon the situation prevailing in 2011 when the novel was published. The situations presented in the novel are such as suicidal bombings, security scrutiny, foreigner’s killings in the context of post 9/11 scenario where American agenda is influencing the discourse of Pakistani masses too.

Pakistani masses have developed certain fears towards the government because of its support to war against terror. America has developed a discourse of war on terror through media which seems to be manipulated for exploitation of the weak countries (politically instable). An Uzbek in the novel comments which represents the thinking of Pakistani folk as well, “We thought we were free, but now our own president works against us. Jailing those who are strong, shooting those who are weak!” (p.144). In Dawn Newspaper (2017) it was reported, “Pakistan’s top civilian and leadership on Thursday strongly rejected US president Donald Trump’s allegations of insincerity and duplicity in the fight against terrorism and set conditions for future counterterrorism cooperation with Washington and Kabul, specially the removal of hideouts in Eastern Afghanistan.” The media news exposes agenda of the US to keep Pakistan under power control though Trump’s speech was furious enough to delink us from them.

Discourse has been shaped by hegemonic roles of powerful bodies. Khan refers to such power generated discourse which is used to control minds of masses.

A similar comment has been made on “Silk Route” suggesting that it was never meant for convenience and for close interaction between people from different regions. Khan has provoked us to read and see beyond that naïve perception. Routes are actually keys to economic strength and prosperity, a polite replacement for the word invasion. Discourse is manipulated to serve the purpose of the powerful lobbies therefore what government announces might not meet the expectation of masses as narration reveals sarcastically, “... the ancient Silk Route, a route which had never been *the* route at all, not for us, nor for a single man, horse, or fly” (p.9). We feel that at

first discourse is used to control other countries by strong word powers and further government uses discourse to control or dupe the public.

When it comes to hegemony every word echoes the power practice and therefore Nadir is confused and admits, “Three years later, we still didn’t know why America had called the bombing Operation Anaconda” (p.27). Anacondas are neither found in Afghanistan nor North Pakistan yet the title suggests an American ideology of crushing terrorists the way a South American Anaconda does. There were certain other military operations in the history named after American snakes.

Critical discourse analysis does not only reveal power exercises rather unfolds power relations and power shifts conveyed through discourse. The same addressee in discourse becomes enemy at one time while friend at another because of the power shift. Gujjars, the natives of Northern lands are taken as both friends and enemy as Khan comments, “They’r naturally warlike and deceitful when not on your side, naturally brave and loyal when on your side” (p. 66). It reflects that every statement has its impact according to the power possessed and exercised by its speaker. About war on terror there goes a dialogue between Nadir and Irfan. Nadir asked “And what about Pakistan’s hospitality to the US?” Irfan replied, “Give me your missiles, your drones ... the furtive raptors of your teeming war. Drop these on me – because I’m Pakistani” (p. 27).

The image of Waziristan is that of an accomplice in terrorism that has caused sufferings of Pakistan in the wake of 9/11. The narration supports American claims of Pakistan’s support to terrorists which gives rationale to the US to search and attack areas in Pakistan. “The local tribes of Waziristan harbored Arabs, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Chechens, and Chinese Uyghur Muslims ... Waziristan’s tribal chiefs welcomed everyone except Pakistanis from outside their own tribe” (p. 27). The discourse positions Pakistan in the mid of war between American and Russian blocks. Irfan ridiculed American suspicion, “They think we’r an extension of Vietnam” (p. 28).

In the context of war against terrorism there develops an expressive discourse of both the locals and the foreigners about suicide bombings in the same country. For Farhana, foreigners are to be sympathized because they come to a country where their lives are threatened. Nadir highlights those locals (Pakistanis) who lost their lives too while the target was only the foreigner. The discourse also reflects the unease related to the presence of white man who is making life cumbersome and lifeless for the natives of Northern region. Through discourse, affiliation groups can also be identified. After bomb blast in the valley the news broke, “A bomb exploded in a hotel this morning, killing one foreigner and seven Pakistanis” (p. 26). Farhana was upset and doubted Nadir’s sympathy for her on which he replied, “Sympathetic? One foreigner dies and seven locals. Where’s his sympathy?... we are again weighing lives against each other, one against seven, relevance against irrelevance” (p. 26). This makes the point clear that discourse is a social relational process to shape power groups.

This war has ruined Pakistan and for that Nadir found himself speechless on such a query when Farhana’s father asked him about North of Pakistan as it was always highlighted in the news. “My stomach clenched. *Here it comes*. ‘it’s --- isolated. Isolating. cleansing. I don’t know how to explain. People who live there have names for what we don’t...” (p. 57). Henceforth, war against



terrorism has put Pakistan answerable to the world for explaining their position every time. Pakistanis wish at this, "*Empty my mind, make me a happy man*" (p. 59).

Drones have been significant in this regard because the action is backed by an idea of interfering in South Asian region through Pakistan. "More trouble in Waziristan, where the Pakistan Army's hunt for Baitullah Mehsud and his 'guests' from Uzbekistan and China was turning increasingly bloody. No one believed the drone attacks were launched by Pakistan, at least not only by Pakistan. Irfan called the drones stupid eyes \_ 'If they'r so accurate, how come the war gets bloodier?" (p. 100). A detail has been given about the mechanics of drones. Basically, these are pilotless robot planes and are set from such a distance that at times "A target became a non-target, a non-target became a target. Before the camera could tell them apart, the world could be saved" (p. 103). A drone camera has tremendously strong power to capture, "While a drone can drop two 500-pound bombs with each strike, its camera shows us images of daily life in an area most of us never think about" (p. 103). Drones are like cyber networks, they see us, capture us and we are unaware of it. Similarly drone policies are backed with US agenda of interfering with South Asian politics via Pakistan. The Washington-based research organization did a review of "terror" attacks on US soil since Sept. 11, 2001 and found that most of them were carried out by radical anti-government groups or white supremacists.

The novel has focused upon the dialogue between Nadir and Farhana which conveys the images of Pakistani as projected by Western media and conveyed through Farhana as a common western girl. They have assisted us to understand ideologies working behind image making of Pakistan. Nadir once admitted, "... our conversations were increasingly about Al-Qaeda hideouts, suicide bombers, bearded fanatics" (p. 102).

Nadir, a Pakistani guy who was in America for work has felt that Muslim identity is questioned time and again in the post 9/11 scenario. Once he was questioned by a Latino, "So, you are Moozlim or what?" (p. 10). The very question seems to divide the world into two segments, Muslim and non- Muslim in post 9/11 times. Moreover, the phrase "or what" suggests that Muslim is one agenda that relates to terrorism and the rest of the world is of sufferers.

There is an image making of Pakistan as a poor underdeveloped filthy country, in the West regarding its economic status. When Nadir goes to get job in the US, during interview he was at first discouraged. In interview the employer's discourse at first gives impression that Americans are much interested in natural landscapes which are plenty in Pakistan. The employer asked Nadir to come with something more about Pakistani landscape. He revealed later on, "Next time you go home, take some photographs ... show us the dirt. The misery. Don't waste your time trying to be a nature photographer. Use your advantage" (p.11). The very word "advantage" has dispelled discursive practice that Americans are interested in knowing about what shows Pakistan as a poorly developed and mismanaged country. The discourse is built on commercial value of the idea that is salable and assumption is that Nadir has to sell his idea that matches the employer's demand. Image of Pakistan in Western view is that of a poor country and it should remain the same. The argument is further taken, "your photographs lack authenticity... where are the beggars and

bazaars or anything that resembles your culture” (p. 12). The word culture suggests that this is what Pakistan is and it would not change since cultures exist for ages.

Americans are the buyers and they have no interest in what is natural in Pakistan. They only want to see, write and read what coincides with their perception about Pakistan. Nadir according to American has this advantage that he can show Pakistan better as a first hand observer but his image of Pakistan should be a reflection of the American’s belief. This shows that discourse is much under the influence of economy and power of wealth. The entire media including fiction work projects Pakistan the way people assume it to be in the West and it earns applaud. Significant examples are *I am Malala: the Story of the School Girl who Stood for Education and was shot by the Taliban* (2013) and Sharmeen Obaid’s movie *Saving Face*; tales on acid attacks against women in Pakistan. Khan has also presented the only gloomy image of a docile and subservient Pakistani woman. While she could have enhanced Zulekha’s character who lives in Karachi and Karachi as a metropolitan city has many success stories of educated Pakistani woman to tell. She was told to be killed in a car snatching episode which is again a reflection of miseries prevailing in Pakistan. At this point Khan also seems to reflect upon only negative and passive image of Pakistan. Though her narration regarding Pakistan’s alliance with the US echoes many headlines of the current newspapers, yet status of woman in Pakistan has been taken for granted.

There is interaction developed between locals and foreigners that has shown a superior image of the white man created by those people who have colonial background. Locals tend to resign before them because of the aura of superiority they convey. “They often selected the children, as that woman did now. Perhaps, these Angrez need to feel differently about themselves when they came all the way across the seas and all the way up the glacier to see the lake” (p. 77). Over here, we see Angrez as a different subject not in his own country rather in the country of those who were once subjugated. Farhana took Kiren, child of a local family but the way she treated the entire dealing with her parents is an echo of her superiority feeling about herself. When Farhana wanted to take Kiren with her Irfan stated, “... She’ll be putting them in a very awkward position. They won’t want their child going off with a group of strangers and they won’t want to say no to Farhana, who’s a guest” (p. 108). Moreover, during boating Farhana talked to Nadir in English whenever she wanted the little girl not to understand. This use of language has strengthened Farhana’s hegemonic place and Kiren is treated in a place of a subjugated entity whose understanding does not mean a lot to Farhana, a foreigner. Kiren’s death that has been a fabricated incident but conveyed sentiments which are too serious to be taken for Pakistanis reaction to American interference at the same time, “Of course they wanted us to leave. But they wouldn’t say it, not to us ...” (p. 152).

### **Sociocultural Context**

There is a parallel drawn between Pakistani and American woman to draw reader’s attention to the positioning of woman in relevant societies. The empowered woman of the West has been placed in contrast to the Eastern Pakistani woman whose position is subject to various power practices of society, whether it is at domestic level or political or social. The writer has placed the action in Northern regions of Pakistan to highlight only those women who suffer in Pakistani society.

Nadir keeps comparing his sister Sonia with Farhana. Farhana is an empowered and economically stable American woman while Sonia is unprivileged both economically and socially as a woman though she is educated. Farhana is “wealthier”. Sonia is paid 15000 at a local school and Farhana, “made more than two hundred times as much.” In terms of gift exchange Farhana never “reciprocated” because she takes a Pakistani’s hospitality for granted and there is no need to pay back. Sonia always “bargained” because she has to cut her expenses according to means. While Farhana is not even familiar with the idea of it. As a woman in Pakistani society her status is unstable, “Sonia hadn’t enjoyed much freedom or affection from my father; Farhana received much from hers” (p. 25).

Farhana as a foreigner questions the hypocrisy of Pakistani society when Nadir wants her in privacy but pretends disconnected in public. For Americans this pretention nothing but double standards. “Why did I want her if I didn’t want to hold her hand?” (p. 26) in public. Khan seems to ignore the contextual reference here. Discourse cannot be dissected from the social construct of beliefs and ideologies. “It is an important characteristic of economic, social and cultural changes of late modernity that they exist as discourses as well as processes that are taking place outside discourse, and that the processes that are taking place outside discourse are substantively shaped by these discourses.” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999: 4). Pakistani norms are different from the Western countries and a foreigner’s critique on it seems unjustified.

On the other hand the local Pakistani women cannot be so affirmative in her stance about English women as Farhana was because they do not enjoy power status in society, “What is it like over there, in the north, where the women wear tall hats and walk alongside men” (p. 86). The statement conveys a surprise inquiry of a local woman.

Farhana represents Westerners image about Pakistan. Farhana “decided that Pakistan was a place where women couldn’t survive” (p. 102). The word “decided” reflects the judgmental connotations where she negates all other survivors as Nadir replies, “she thought 85 million Pakistani women were unsurviving?” (p. 102).

The global world of internet has given us space to share views which are generated through controlled media groups of power. When Nadir logged on “A Yahoo! Headline announces the terror threat was red” (p. 102). This is the world of media projection and that has been against Afghanistan and Pakistan despite the fact that Pakistan supported the US plans of eliminating terrorism during various regime.

Nadir’s character is too pivotal in the making of the text. He is someone who has lived with Pakistani people who knew their struggles in day to day life. He is the one who listens to Farhana’s comments regarding Pakistan. Therefore, he serves more than a character, he is a tool to understand the ideologies behind discourse of local Pakistanis of Northern region. He tells himself, “I, on the other hand, was neither guest nor savior nor friend nor wife. I was a murderer, prowling free across their turf” (p.164). He represents those Pakistanis who are blamed to be terrorists without given a chance to explain their position such as Arifa Siddiqui.

## Findings

The research has focused upon reflections of ideology through text. The present research unfolds the abuses of power intricately done through discursive practices in *Thinner than Skin* by applying Fairclough's model of CDA. The CDA of *Thinner than Skin* has delved deep into power practices through discourse which reveals ideational patterns developed over the time period. There are certain factors which exposed the novelist's treatment of both the norms prevailing in Pakistan and America's hegemonic treatment of Pakistan in the light of the concept that discourse is context dependent (Phillips, 2006). Pakistan has become part of war against terrorism since its inception.

At first, study was consolidated by perusal of text in its form which is the first layer of CDA. Khan has used italicized words and sentences to magnify the hidden meanings of discourse which is actual function of CDA. Discourse is always context bound and deep understanding of various prevailing beliefs and ideologies on discourse helps in understanding discursive practices in a society. Furthermore, text was analyzed for both political and sociocultural ideologies reflected through discourse. Resultantly, the research highlighted the role of South Asian fiction writers in developing image of Pakistan at international level. Political ideology in question is American war on terror that has affected the discourse of Pakistani people and media owing to Pakistan's dormant role in this policy. Pakistan has gained no significant place in America's policy making due to its unstable economy and political upheavals. Nadir once commented that no matter whether it is drone or something else Americans give it to Pakistan. According to socio cultural ideology of the West about Pakistan, a woman in Pakistan is projected as a victim who neither has any right nor worth in the society. Her status in society is also subject to discourse of power men use against her and her representation in discourse of the powerless.

## Discursive Practices

In media coverage of any suicide bombing, the foreigner remains the main loss in media discourse and locals are the powerless invisible beings in this grand war on terror. This joint effort of Pakistan with America landed Pakistan into a chaotic world ridden with many killings in the region of Waziristan. Khan has reflected quarries developed in the minds of Pakistanis regarding this war.

Donald Trump's recent rebuke shocked the higher military officials in Pakistan as it was an unjust dismissal of Pakistan from American discourse of world politics. It seemed to change power role of Pakistan but then the meetings of higher Army officials of both the countries resumed Pak American relations and joint pledge of ending terrorism. This latest happening in media discourse has made Khan's work more relevant to the present year even after many years of its publication because the ideologies behind the mediated discourse remains the same.

Apart from political scenario, the novel is a grim critique on Western ideology regarding Western woman as empowered and enlightened while Eastern woman as submissive and miserable. This discourse is also reflected in patriarchal set up of Pakistan, that is the reason for Nadir to keep comparing his sister with a Western woman Farhana with a superior gusto for the latter both in terms of hegemonic and economic status in society. A similar hierarchy was identified

in Farhan's discourse with the local people. She can control her relation with them as she likes which led her to use English in her communication with Nadir when she wanted to exclude Kiren from the circle of us. This however made Kiren's existence as Others who had been given no discourse to express their grief over Kiren's loss (Bhabha, 2012).

America has represented the West as superior, enlightened, humanitarian and civilized while Pakistan as a developing country is associated with discourse of powerless, poor, ignorant and uneducated. It can be concluded through this research that in the context of war against terrorism and Western ideology about Pakistani woman, the discursive practices show powerful positioning of America and subordinating powerless position of Pakistan in the world politics and sociocultural understanding. Moreover, Pakistan emerges as a patriarchal conservative country where woman has no importance. Khan has created an image of this kind of Pakistani woman which echoes the Western ideology of superior west and inferior barbarous East (specifically Pakistan in this novel). The research has focused upon two main ideologies of America, war against terror and miserable plight of woman in Pakistan. *Thinner than Skin* is an apt example to understand social and discursive practices which play pivotal role in making images through discourse.

## Conclusion

The findings of critical discourse analysis show that the author conveyed influences of ideologies on discourse in political and sociocultural perspectives in Pakistani society. There are different ideologies both political (America's war against terror) and sociocultural that shape the discourse. Background knowledge of such hidden agendas can help us in understanding influence of powerful entities on powerless through discursive practices.

The research has brought forth image making of Pakistan through the developing discourse of the West as presented through a foreigner in the novel. Although Khan has been successful in presenting bewildered situation of Pakistan in war on terror as it is also supported by various news headlines, yet image of Pakistani woman portrayed in the novel does not relate to the modern enlightened and empowered woman of Pakistan. Khan did not view Pakistan as a place where both conservative and modern trends are intertwined in the social practices. Moreover, the novel exposed status of Pakistan in 2012 in the international politics yet discourse developed in media specially related to higher army officials further consolidated the fictional yet realistic world of Khan.

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